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NORTH CAROLINA WOMEN  
IN THE WORLD WAR



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# North Carolina Women in the World War

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AN ADDRESS

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of the University of North Carolina

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# North Carolina Women in the World War

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When the Secretary of War called upon the women of America to do their part in winning the war, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw asked Mr. Baker what he expected the woman's committee to do. "We want you to co-ordinate the woman's work of the United States," said Mr. Baker, "all the war work of the women, so that they will not duplicate, they will not overlap and they will co-operate in carrying out every requirement of the government." Perhaps Mr. Baker feared that it would be impossible to get women to co-operate; so Dr. Shaw promptly replied:

"Mr. Secretary, you seem to think that the women will not co-operate; that is because you have been dealing with men. If you will give them an object big enough and put back of them an incentive strong enough, you will find that the women of this country will co-operate, Mr. Secretary."

Today it is recognized, not only that the women fully maintained their pledge of co-operation from the war's beginning to its end, but also, as Dr. Shaw says, none too strongly, that the war could never have been won if it had not been for the work of the women. Certainly it is true that the women of this country suffered no such hardships, bore no such burdens, as were imposed by dire necessity upon the women of many other countries. But their readiness to serve to any extent was absolute; and within the limits of the situation, they gave themselves fully and without stint. The massed effort of many millions of women, energies bent to a single aim, is without parallel in history; and the extent and magnitude of that effort, ever growing in volume and intensity, were curtailed only by the comparative brevity of the war's duration.

Dr. Anna Howard Shaw was designated by the President as Chairman of the Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense; and of the seventy-five presidents of the largest women's organizations in the United States was formed the Advisory Committee of the Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense. This Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense, was then organized in every State in the Union under the direction of the National Woman's Committee. The plan proposed and carried out was "to co-ordinate women's organizations and their working forces, in order to enlist at once the greatest possible number in the service which the national crisis demanded, and to supply a new and direct channel of communication and co-operation

between the women and the departments of the United States Government." The fundamental idea was that this organization was to be a clearing house for all women's war work, and not a new organization meeting in competition with other organizations.

The leader in this work in North Carolina was Mrs. Laura Holmes Reilley, of Charlotte, second vice-president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (National), who, on May 28, 1917, received a commission from the Governor of North Carolina, appointing her a member of the State Council of Defense. She was shortly afterwards designated Chairman of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense; and was the intermediary for maintaining the closest and most friendly relations between the State Council and the Woman's Committee, herself being, with the exception of chairman and secretary, the only member present at all the meetings of the State Council. The work was mapped out on large and constructive lines, the division of the organization being effected by counties and Congressional Districts, and the mere enumeration of the departments indicates the magnitude and comprehensiveness of the services rendered, covering, as they did, almost every phase of social service.

The foremost function of the Woman's Committee, it must be made plain, was local, co-ordinative and directive. Forces were set in motion in countless directions and through innumerable channels for carrying on the various phases of patriotic endeavor, and these forces made themselves powerfully felt in every corner of the State. During the first thirteen months of its work 11,358 North Carolina women formally registered for service, in consequence of which many government positions were filled and many women put in touch with the proper authorities for specific war work. North Carolina's slogan in food production was "A Garden for Every Home the Year Around"; and the food production of the State was immensely stimulated through this and other powerful agencies, being four times greater in 1917-18 than in the year preceding. The work in food administration was so vital and integral a factor in war work in this state that I shall speak of it later in greater detail. In all their work the devoted women "sanctified the daily duties by the spirit of sacrifice and of patriotism." In these organizations throughout the nation ten million women concentrated their fruitful energies upon the labor asked for by the Government, which went far to bring victory to our arms.

There was fortunately already in existence an organization which furnished the readiest outlet and avenue for woman's sacrificial and maternal ministrations to crusading and suffering humanity. This was that noble and consecrated band, the American National Red Cross,

which, judged by its realities no less than by its ideals, truly deserves to be called sublime. With perfect fitness it has been called "the greatest mother in the world," seeking to draw "a vast net of mercy through an ocean of unspeakable pain." From Belgium and from France went up one of the most poignant appeals to which a stricken world has ever lent ear. It is estimated that 1,250,000 people in Belgium and France alone were driven from their homes by the German invasion. During the height of our own struggle, ten million human beings looked to us for sustenance and for raiment—helplessly hemmed in behind the bristling wall of German bayonets. Is it any wonder, then—though wonder indeed it be!—that with this clamant appeal added to the urgent call of our own great needs, the membership of the National Red Cross leaped within fifteen months from less than a half million (486,194) to more than twenty millions (20,468,103), with the additional membership of eight millions in the Junior Red Cross. Of refugee garments, hospital supplies and garments, knitted articles and surgical dressings, the American Red Cross furnished during the war to the value of upwards of one hundred millions of dollars, and the American people, through this channel, gave in money and materials for the world's relief upwards of 350 millions of dollars.

The Southern division of this great organization, including women of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and Tennessee, contributed a mighty share in the total result—producing more than ten million articles (10,390,796), valued at a total of considerably more than three million dollars (3,187,233). In this connection I wish to stress the impressive demonstration, at once of women's efficient canvassing and of North Carolina's patriotism, afforded by the Second Red Cross War Fund Drive (1918)—North Carolina's quota being \$608,500, and her total collections \$1,135,621.39—practically double the amount. The official report which has recently reached me from the Southern Division, Atlanta, includes every finished article made and sent to this division from North Carolina, and numbers a total of 2,339,907 articles.

Figures, I must confess, have always had a certain fascination for me. But when I think of what these figures represent of hardship gladly suffered, of sacrifice willingly made, they become symbolic with the vitality of human greatness.

Everywhere throughout North Carolina women found an outlet for patriotic service through Red Cross organizations to the number of 140 Chapters, 360 Branches, and 250 Auxiliaries. These raised the total sum of \$2,052,800.94—including the amounts raised in the First (\$318,606.47) and Second (\$1,135,621.39) Red Cross Drives, and the amount

other than War Funds collected (\$598,573.08). No less patriotic was the Junior Red Cross, with its 210 Auxiliaries and 41,667 members in North Carolina, for in addition to many other articles and funds supplied and services rendered, it contributed a total of 10,229 articles for hospitals and for soldiers' and sailors' wear.

One of the most valuable services performed by these chapters, because of the immediate needs and far-reaching results, was the work of the Home Service Sections, which were organized by well-nigh every chapter in the State. Only twelve of the chapters had trained workers; the remainder had untrained, volunteer workers. How many a sick or disabled soldier, how many a despairing wife, how many a destitute family were aided by these angels of mercy! Cut these figures and they will bleed: between October 1, 1917, and August 1, 1919, 22,599 families in North Carolina have been assisted by Home Service Sections in various ways, and \$29,309.47 has been given or loaned in money relief to these families.

And how shall I find words to tell the romantic story of the Canteen Service in North Carolina during the Great War! Where all towns were ready and willing it seems invidious to mention those specifically set down in the official report because of their relation to lines of traffic. In North Carolina, with some 800 workers engaged, a million men were served. But if I have hitherto deluged you with figures I shall spare you now a catalog of the tens of thousands of gallons of coffee, hundreds of thousands of sandwiches, iced drinks, slices of cake, packets of candy, and bundles of fruits—not to mention the millions of cigarettes—with which the doughboys were deluged, to the delight of their hearts and the gratification of their palates.

If time permitted I would gladly say something of the devoted work of the individual chapters of the Red Cross in the State. A word only of this chapter or that is possible; but the patriotism, devotion and service of all were alike, and, alike, unquestioned. Lieutenant House will eventually narrate the full story and give due credit to each and all. Permit me to say, however, that the canteen work of the Raleigh chapter was probably without a parallel in North Carolina; for up to July 1, 1919, the Raleigh Canteen served 255,000 American soldiers. The devoted work of these women—in snow and ice, heat and cold, at noon and at midnight—under the leadership of Mrs. J. J. Bernard, is now a part of North Carolina's history; and thousands of soldiers will never forget the cheer, the comfort and the sympathy which they dispensed. I cannot refrain from paying tribute in passing to the indefatigable labors and crusading enthusiasm of the president of this great chapter, Mrs. William B. Grimes.

The campaign for contributions by tobacco growers, engineered by such chapters as Goldsboro, Reidsville and Pitt County, for example—each tobacco grower being asked to contribute a pile of his crop—were particularly characteristic of this section, as was also the campaign for cotton which was carried out successfully by the Cleveland County chapter. And I cannot leave unmentioned the letter (24 Rue Borghese, Neuilly, February 12, 1916) written by King Albert's sister, Henriette, Duchess of Vendome, to some ladies of Tryon, thanking them "for the splendid gifts you have so generously sent, and we all express our warmest, most heartfelt thanks to the 'Florence Nightingale Band.' Your charity is helping us to tend our poor men—all *'grands blessés.'* May God bless and reward you for the good and generous help sent to our dear and valiant men." If time permitted I would gladly tell of the memorable war work of the women's colleges in North Carolina—of the State Normal College, the recognized leader among North Carolina colleges in organizing and stimulating women's war work, through which more than 400 women passed on their way into government service; of the many women's colleges of Raleigh which were among the foremost in their pledge and their performance; of the Greensboro College for Women, Salem Academy and College, and many others, too numerous to enumerate.

Certain features of the work accomplished by the women of North Carolina are so conspicuous, indeed I may almost say spectacular, in value and efficiency, that I feel impelled to speak of them in some detail. I have already spoken of the Red Cross War Fund Drives; but paramount even to these in importance were the great Drives for Liberty Loans and the Fifth, the Victory Loan, imperatively needed for carrying on the work of the government itself and supplying the very sinews of war. The National Woman's Liberty Loan Committee, created by the Secretary of the Treasury, began its business as the first and only executive committee of women in the Government of the United States. The organization was not effected in time to do active work in the First Liberty Loan Drive; but by the time the Second Liberty Loan Drive was launched North Carolina was ready to stand side by side with other States to do her part. Mrs. R. J. Reynolds, of Winston-Salem, was State Chairman during the Second Liberty Loan Campaign; and upon her resignation immediately thereafter, Mrs. R. H. Latham, of Winston-Salem, was appointed to undertake the heavy task. Mrs. Latham held the chairmanship through the Third and Fourth Drives, after which she was compelled to resign because of overtaxed eyesight. Mrs. John A. Long, of Kinston, succeeded Mrs. Latham and served

through the Victory Loan Drive. The figures which follow are eloquent of the spirit of North Carolina and of the devoted labors of her women to aid the government to full extent of their powers.

**SECOND LIBERTY LOAN**

Total Number of Subscribers.....	4,228
Total Amount Subscribed.....	\$4,846,900

**THIRD LIBERTY LOAN**

Total Amount Subscribed.....	\$7,887,750
Amount Subscribed by Women.....	\$823,100

**FOURTH LIBERTY LOAN**

Total Quota .....	\$39,900,000
Amount Subscribed Through Women.....	\$14,129,300

being 35 per cent of the whole.

**FIFTH, OR VICTORY LOAN**

Total Number of Bonds Sold.....	9,281
Total Amount Subscribed.....	\$7,576,500

No figures, however impressive, can tell the truly thrilling and touching story of this splendid outburst of patriotic fervor. I, personally, have known a farmer of small means, ordinarily saving to miserliness, go to the bank with face positively lit as by an inner flame and cheerfully borrow a thousand dollars on his little farm to invest in War Savings Stamps. Mrs. Long tells me of an old woman who joyously invested her entire life-time savings in a hundred-dollar bond, buying it with a thousand dimes unearthed from an old jug buried beneath the floor of her little cottage. While it is true that the women were not especially organized in the War Savings Campaigns, we all know that they did magnificent local work in personal canvass and in giving inspiration to the general movement. Says Mr. F. H. Fries, State Director, War Savings Campaign: "To the women of North Carolina acknowledgement must be made for their most excellent service to the War Savings Cause. Club women, school teachers, home demonstration agents, housewives—they all fell into the work heart and body. Mrs. Clarence Johnson, President of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, was constantly promoting War Savings. A large majority of the War Savings societies was organized by women. Thrift gardens were the special care of country women. During the June Drive a colored woman in Warren County, a school teacher, by herself

secured \$1,500 in pledges. Without the women's aid the War Savings record of North Carolina would be far short of what it is."

A conspicuous and remarkable feature of the work of North Carolina women in the Great War, indicative of the type of service women are most particularly qualified to render, was their participation in War Camp Community Service. Its bases were sound and permanent, for peace as well as for war; and were solidly laid by organizations fundamentally concerned in play, outdoor and recreational activities for the American youth. The War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities summoned the Playground and Recreation Association of America to develop and organize social and recreational resources in the neighborhood of training camps (May 9, 1917); and from this action sprang the incomparable War Camp Community Service. As Miss Margaret Berry, an efficient laborer in this service, well says: "The insignia of the organization, the Red Circle, soon became to the service men of the army and navy as the beacon light to the mariner, and the War Camp Community Service slogan 'Surround the Camp with Hospitality,' was literally enacted in more than 600 American communities." The national budget for the year ending October 31, 1919, was \$15,000,000; and in the 300 or more Red Circle club houses, some 2,500,000 uniformed men were provided with sleeping accommodations in 1918 alone.

In North Carolina, perhaps the most extraordinary, prolonged and unceasing efforts to entertain the soldiers and to surround them with the influences of home, were made at Charlotte, the city nearest Camp Greene, which had during its existence numbers of soldiers ranging from two thousand to sixty thousand. During the late autumn of 1917, for example, the ladies of Charlotte entertained repeatedly at home meals on Sundays between 3,000 and 4,000 soldiers from Camp Greene. But equally devoted and faithful work was done at Raleigh, Wilmington, Fayetteville and Southport, though on a somewhat lesser scale because of smaller bodies of soldiers encamped nearby; and the work of the women of Asheville was of a peculiarly memorable type, especially in the form of ministrations and gifts to the sick soldiers at Kenilworth, and other rest and recuperative locations. The W. C. C. S. at Raleigh, Charlotte and elsewhere were along similar lines—various forms of entertainment afforded the soldiers: concerts, movies, dances, the hospitality of city clubs, city churches and Red Circle Clubs supplying libraries of books and magazines to the soldiers, and in general throwing around the boys in the camps the home atmosphere of fireside, friendship and innocent enjoyment. In this brief survey I regret that space does not permit me to take account of innumerable individual and cor-

porate acts of hospitality, such as the gifts of the ladies of Statesville to Camp Greene, the work of the women through the churches, notably the memorable work at the Church of the Good Shepherd, "first to provide for Camp Polk, last to stop." Particular record should be made of the fine work of Miss Mary F. De Vane as Director for North Carolina of the American Library Association. In addition to one thousand dollars in money raised for the purchase of books, twenty-five thousand volumes were collected and distributed to the soldiers and sailors in this country and abroad. It was "a wonderful collection of beautiful books and a credit to the State."

Mr. Herbert Hoover asserted again and again, "Food will win the war." The story of the able work of the Food Administrator is a familiar one to all of us; and in the Home Demonstration work and Girls' Clubs, Mrs. Jane McKimmon has attracted the admiring eyes of the nation to this State. Mrs. Maude Radford Warren's glowing account of that work, which appeared in *The Country Gentleman*, must speak in lieu of any extended account of my own. The magnitude of Mrs. McKimmon's labors is evidenced by her report for 1918, during which year 8,807 food demonstrations were given and 8,250 meetings held, with an attendance of 826,283 people. In the organized clubs 16,663 women and girls did intensive conservation work, and as additional club workers there were 4,744 colored women organized in twenty counties. Exclusive of the unprecedented amount of work in the conserving of foodstuffs, vegetables and fruit, carried on by the canning clubs, there were 132 community canneries in operation in 1918, with an approximate output of 357,688 cans; and during the same year a total of 228,903 pounds of fruit and vegetables dried is reported. I must leave to others to tell the stirring stories of home demonstration work in the mill villages, the work among the colored people, the perennial campaign for gardens. Of all the figures at my disposal perhaps the most impressive and significant are these, for the year 1917, when sixty counties had been organized:

Number girls reporting.....	14,382
Number cans .....	8,778,262
Value of products.....	\$2,179,262
Total cost .....	\$544,843
Total profits .....	\$1,634,519

Mention deserves to be made of the devoted work of the North Carolina women who served as County and City Food Administrators; and I have particularly in mind Mrs. Chamberlain for Wake, Miss Walker for Scotland, and Mrs. Young for Winston-Salem.

Another band of splendid workers who rendered valiant service at home and abroad was the Young Woman's Christian Association, so enthusiastically sponsored and energetically aided in its work by Mrs. Josephus Daniels. Of knowledge and pride to every North Carolinian was the honor paid to Mrs. Thomas W. Bickett in being chosen one of the commissioners sent by the Y. W. C. A. to Europe to study at "The Front," the needs and problems of the people during reconstruction. Upon her return Mrs. Bickett made forceful speeches in many parts of the State, pushing with extreme activity and vigor the work of the Y. W. C. A. in North Carolina.

In connection with women's work during the war I must not forget to mention their business and executive work, as illustrated, for example, by Miss Harriet Berry, of Chapel Hill, who during the two years' absence of Col. Joseph H. Pratt in the army, was acting head of the North Carolina Geological Survey, Secretary of the North Carolina Good Roads Association, chairman for women in Orange County for the four Liberty Loans, and Chairman of the Committee on Women in Industry, North Carolina Council of Defense.

It is too soon for me, or for anyone, to paint in true colors or give in even measurable exactitude, any account which would do justice to the blessed and merciful work of the nurses who labored in the camps and hospitals, here or abroad, who went forward into the deadly danger zones, and with the calmness of beings from some higher realm performed their services of beneficence, their errands of mercy, to the accompaniment of the cannon's roar. Up to October 1, 1918, the A. R. C. alone enrolled during the war more than 30,000 nurses, and more than 400 served in England, France, Italy, Russia, Greece and Palestine.

Many nurses went into national service from this state; their names will forever constitute an especial roll of honor. Two medical units of special service and distinction went from this state, one under Dr. Addison Brenizer, of Charlotte, and the other under Dr. John Wesley Long, of Greensboro. An excerpt from the account of Base Hospital No. 65, kindly supplied me by Dr. Long, Lieut. Col. M. C., U. S. A. (Ret.), will give a vivid picture of this splendid type of service:

"Base Hospital No. 65 was organized by the writer, with the assistance of some other medical men under authority granted directly by the Surgeon General of the United States Army. One of the requirements specified by the War Department was that the personnel be secured from North Carolina. Whereupon we enlisted 32 medical officers, 203 enlisted men, and 100 nurses. It required unremitting work for many months. Ninety per cent of the nurses were North Carolinians, a few for certain reasons having been secured from elsewhere. They were all mobilized at one of the nurses' bases in

New York City. They were then sent in a body to France where they joined Hase Hospital 65 at Kerhuon, near Brest, where it remained from early in September, 1918, to August, 1919.

"The work accomplished by this unit, an important part of which was the work done by the nurses, has gone down in the history of the War Department as one of unexcelled value. The Hospital handled over 40,000 patients.

"Directly after the unit reached its location and before it was possible to get things in working order because of the lack of conveniences, 2,200 desperately sick patients from the transports were sent to this hospital. At this time there were no electric lights, only ordinary oil hand-lanterns and flash-lights were available. There were no walks between the buildings, of which there were over one hundred. The nurses had to wear rubber boots and wade through rain and slush. Remember that Secretary Baker said that it rained at Brest 330 days in a year. The hospital eventually had a capacity of 4,000.

"At the time mentioned the buildings, which were of the Swiss barracks type, were being erected. None of them were fully equipped; many of them did not have even windows, and many of the beds did not have mattresses. One hundred nurses and 200 enlisted men were of necessity compelled to look after this large number of sick and dying men. Some of them were dying and the others dead when they moved them from the stretchers upon which they came. The hospital handled wounded men (*blessé*, as the French say), cases of influenza, pneumonia, pleurisy, cerebro-spinal meningitis, and insanity. It was a task for the stout-hearted and called for the best that there was in a nurse to be called upon for such heroic service under such trying circumstances.

"For instance, one night about midnight a storm swept up the harbor of Brest striking the hospital, which was at the head of the harbor, with full force. The roof of one of the barracks containing twenty-five operative cases was lifted off. Out into the darkness and rain and storm the officers, men and nurses rushed to the rescue of the helpless patients. The engineer corps was called out to prop up the sides of the building to keep it from collapsing. Through this trying ordeal the nurses never flinched, but stood by us to the last with a loyalty and helpful sympathy that was beyond comparison.

"In October, 1918, the Chief Surgeon of the American Expeditionary Forces called upon Base Hospital No. 65 for two operating teams to be sent to the front. This called for a highly trained operating room nurse for each team. For this important and hazardous duty I selected two splendid North Carolina girls. They went with their teams as assigned and spent many weeks in active duty close to the firing lines and within sound of the big guns."

I desire to make mention, at least—though it deserves extended treatment—of the desperate fight waged by the women and the doctors of the state against the insidious and deadly "Spanish Influenza." I would pay immortal tribute to Miss Elizabeth Roper, situated at Chapel Hill, who at the height of the influenza epidemic gave up a remunerative position as trained nurse in a private family to minister to the University boys, making the supreme sacrifice of her life for her country.

North Carolina has the honor of having produced the Great War's most famous field nurse, and after Edith Cavell, I believe, the nurse most celebrated in the despatches and stories of the war from its outset. This is the daughter of Dr. S. Westray Battle, of Asheville, Madelon, who was affectionately called "Glory" by her English friends, because of her pride of America; they declared she was always "waving Old Glory."

At the very beginning of the conflict in 1914 she offered her services "for the duration of the war"; and while her husband, Colonel Hancock, was serving under Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, with the British Army in France, she was giving untiring and valiant service in Belgium. Because of her wonderful work in the trenches and first-aid dressing stations as well as in the field hospitals, the Belgian soldiers named her "Sister Glory Hancock." Ever within the sound of the guns and frequently within their range, she stood unmoved amid showers of falling glass and splintered roofs; she saw hospital beds blown to fragments during the intense shelling to which the Germans subjected the Belgian towns. This noble woman who served under the British Red Cross, knew what it was—so steady was the stream of wounded after Mons and during the retreat from Antwerp—to go for a month without having her clothes off. "Sister Glory Hancock" had the great and fully merited honor of being decorated by both King George of England and King Albert of Belgium. With North Carolina in the field there was "Glory enough for all"—and all added to her glory—with the Croix Civique, the Order of Mons, the Croix de Guerre, and the badge of a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

As we turn today to the heavy tasks of reconstruction and reorganization of civil life, we cannot in justice forget the part played by women as civilians in the Great War. And I look confidently forward to a time in the near future when, not as a reward, but as a recognition of justice, the women of North Carolina, and of America, shall receive equal civil, legal and political rights with their partners, men, in the great business of making the world a better place to live in.





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